

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-37 are pending in the present application. Claim 17 has been amended. Claims 1, 17, and 33 are independent claims.

Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because Fig. 1 illustrates only that which is old. A replacement sheet is attached hereto in which Fig. 1 has been changed to include the label "Conventional Art." Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 1-16 and 33-37 are allowable.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 17-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner indicates that "a multistage portion" recited in line 7 of claim 17 lacks sufficient antecedent basis. Applicants respectfully submit that the inclusion of this feature was the result of an inadvertent typographical error and that this feature was intended to be "the transforming portion." Thus, Applicants have amended claim 17 to correct this typographical error.

In view of this amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that there is sufficient antecedent basis for each of the recited features in claims 17-32. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested. Since no other grounds of rejection have been presented in connection with claims 17-32, Applicants further submit that these claims are now in condition for allowance.

Comments and Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance

The Examiner, in the Statement of Reasons For Allowance, offers generic statements as to why claims 1-16 and claims 33-37, respectively, are allowable over the prior art of record. Although Applicants agree that each of these claims define over the prior art of record, Applicants wish to emphasize that it is each claim, taken as a whole, which defines the claimed invention. Applicants further emphasize that the claims as a whole, including the various interrelationships and interconnections between the various claimed elements, are not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Furthermore, the Examiner's Statement apparently paraphrases certain limitations of the independent claims. In view of the different language recited in independent claims 1 and 33, Applicants submit that the Examiner's Statement should not in any way unduly limit the scope of the claims, which should be interpreted in light of the actual language used therein.

Thus, Applicants respectfully emphasize that each claim should be considered as a whole, including the various interrelationships and interconnections between the various claim elements, and that each claim should be interpreted based upon its specific claim language and other appropriate parameters.

Conclusion

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but to merely show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

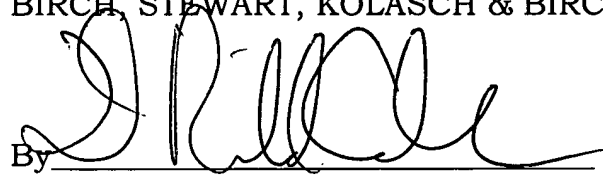
Applicants respectfully submit that all of the objections and stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding objections and rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Jason W. Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned in order to conduct an interview in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Anderson", written over a horizontal line.

By
D. Richard Anderson, #40,439

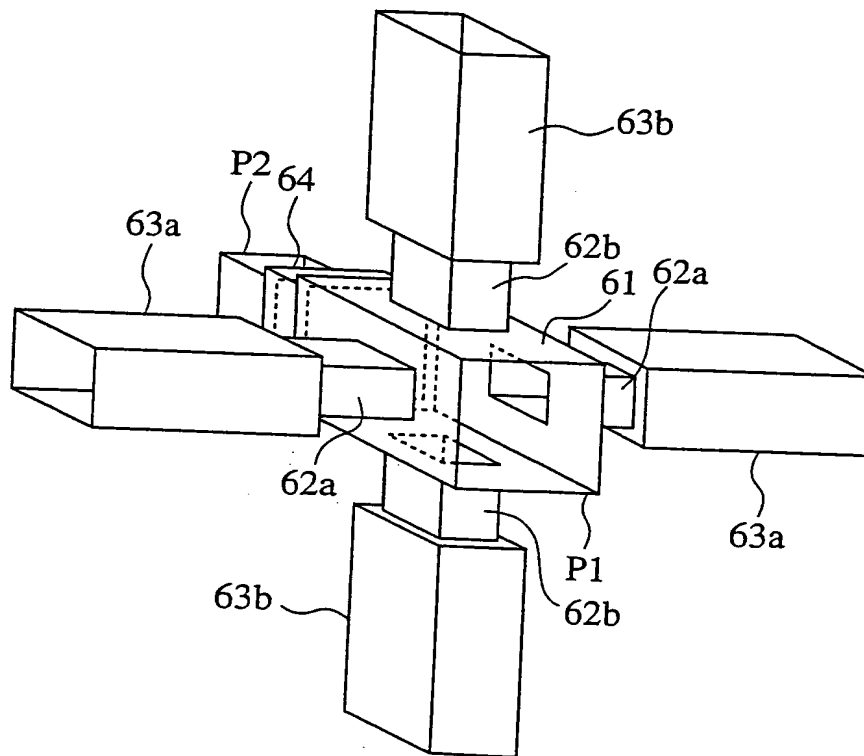
Handwritten initials "DRA" in black ink.

DRA/JWR/kpc

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000



FIG.1



CONVENTIONAL ART